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President Sadat on a working visit to Bonn

Frankfurter Allgemeine

President Sadat's 31 March visit to Bonn was a working visit without the red carpet treatment. It was almost a year to the day since the Egyptian leader paid Bonn his first official visit.

Egypt's relations with the West have steadily improved since President Sadat ousted his predecessor's pro-Soviet advisers in May 1971.

Yet Egypt's finest hour when, in the wake of the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, President Sadat was a principal intermediary in the Middle East conflict and grew increasingly important in Western eyes, is fast receding into the dim and distant past. Does the West really need President Sadat any longer?

This query is made without the slightest intention of being cynical. In foreign affairs diplomatic routine is frequently at loggerheads with common sense.

Since the Kissinger era European diplomats have grown accustomed to taking President Sadat seriously as an opposite number, but the Egyptian leader will no longer be able to give a policy of gradual improvements in the Middle East situation that extra nudge needed for it to gain general acceptance.

The very idea is now past history. Syria and Jordan are no longer interested. Neither are the Israelis.

If President Sadat were to resume the status of a key diplomatic figure in any new round of Middle East talks it would no doubt serve to boost his personal prestige, but this does not necessarily mean that the West should try to ensure that the Egyptian leader is chosen for the part.

Configurations are quick to change in the Middle East. Only a few weeks ago Bonn Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher harboured hopes of a change of heart on the Palestinians' part, expressly mentioning the fact to Arab diplomats.

The tensely-awaited conference of the Palestinian National Council, which ended in Cairo on 20 March, dashed such hopes with a vengeance. The PLO seems determined to fight on until final victory.

The Egyptian government has since intimated in no uncertain terms that it does not consider itself the Palestinians' wet-nurse. At present President Sadat is hardly in a position to bring much political pressure to bear on the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in which extremists have the upper hand.

So at the moment the Egyptian leader hardly seems shortlisted for the role of intermediary in further contacts with the Palestinians. But Egypt nonetheless remains a focal point of Western diplomats in the Middle East for two other reasons.

For years to come the industrialised countries will rely on substantial oil imports from the Arab world, particularly Saudi Arabia.

No one in Europe knows much about Saudi Arabia, but Arab politicians appreciate how potentially unstable the kingdom is. Were Anwar Sadat, the level-headed statesman, to be replaced in Cairo by a man in Colonel Gaddafy's mould, the Saudi throne would be in jeopardy, and so would the sum total of oil supplies to the West.

So this country would do well to lend the Egyptian economy generous support, and President Sadat remains an important political partner from Bonn's point of view too.

In January Egypt's pro-Moscow Communists tried to oust him by means of a mass uprising. Cairo's experiments in multi-party democracy were to be superseded by a Marxist dictatorship along East European lines.

Fortunately the coup failed and President Sadat is now firmly back in control.

Six years ago he singlehandedly cast off the trammels of the late President Nasser's power apparatus, entirely without outside assistance and by means of a political tour de force lasting several years.

For some time this turn of events proved difficult to anticipate even in Cairo itself. Musa Sabri, an Egyptian journalist who is one of the President's close associates, recently edited a volume of important source documents that shed light on the way in which President Sadat accomplished this feat.

Yet even without going into the finer details it is appreciated in the West that President Sadat is in favour of parliamentary freedom.

In recent years Western Europe has done much to nurture the tender shoots of democracy in countries such as Greece, Portugal and Spain. The fate of democracy in Egypt cannot be immaterial to Europe either.

The process of democratisation in Egypt may not measure up to much by European yardsticks but open criticism can now be levelled in the Egyptian parliament at Ministers, the Premier and even the head of State, and that is saying something.

Not for more than a quarter of a century has there been so much freedom in the country.

President Sadat is a man who can take, and indeed relishes, a frank exchange of views. Recent meetings between the Bonn and Cairo Foreign Ministers were marked by too many trite phrases. There was too much resounding verbiage and too little meat.

President Sadat's visit to Bonn will have represented a welcome opportunity of continuing where he and Helmut Schmidt left off a year ago.

The Middle East will be back on the foreign affairs agenda this year as ever, not only in Cairo, but also in Washington, Moscow and Bonn.

Harald Vocke

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 31 March 1977)



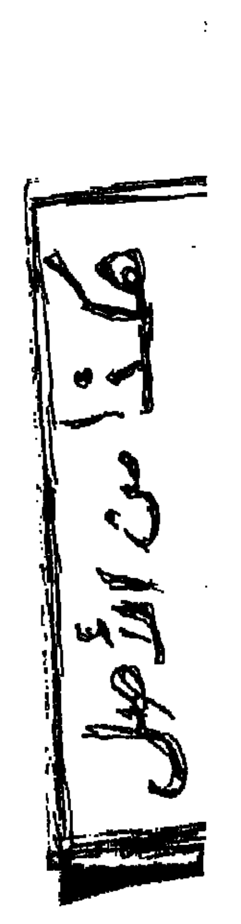
Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, left, and President Walter Scheel arriving at Scheel's residence. President Sadat was in Bonn on 31 March on the first stop of a week-long tour which took him to Bonn, Paris and Washington (Photos: dpa)

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US State Secretary Vance in Bonn

US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, left, pictured during talks in Bonn with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, centre, and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on the outcome of the latest SALT II negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union over strategic arms curbs. Vance was on a tour of the main West European capitals.



■ EUROPE

Challenge to Parliamentary system a major item at Anglo-German talks

It was no coincidence that the largest conference chamber at this year's Anglo-Federal Republic talks in Königswinter on the Rhine was reserved for a working party on The Challenge to the Parliamentary System.

Mr Callaghan's Labour government had just survived by the skin of its teeth a Conservative-sponsored vote of no-confidence at Westminster, but only by coming to terms with Mr Steel's baker's dozen of Liberal MPs.

In this country the Bonn coalition of Social and Free Democrats has also taken a few knocks and owes its survival to an Opposition that seems to be in even greater disarray.

All over Europe minority governments now seem to be the rule rather than the exception. Everywhere organised groups are making headway in the political vacuum left behind by the parties that have traditionally commanded mass appeal.

For years the main item on the Königswinter agenda was *foreign affairs* and security. This year it turned out to be the domestic crisis of European democracy.

Labour MP John McIntosh put the problem in a nutshell. "Everywhere," he noted, "lobbies and pressure groups are circumventing parliaments in order to bring direct influence to bear on governments."

In this country demonstrators and campaigners are easily outflanking a Social Democratic government on the left of the political spectrum. They organise sit-ins on sites earmarked for nuclear power stations and even resort to the courts of law to force the authorities to bring on-site construction work to a halt.

The state, one can but conclude, has grown less and less mindful of the hardships faced and the desires cherished by the man in the street.

Elections have come to be regarded as a mere ritual. The major political parties are currently doing no more than rehearsing integration; innovation seems to have been forgotten.

Is there any hope for the parliamentary system? The conclusion reached at the twenty-seventh annual round of Königswinter talks was a cautious affirmative, subject to a proviso.

The proviso was that parliaments must stop merely rubber-stamping decision reached by faceless civil servants. They must also grasp the opportunity presented by the failure of government and the dissatisfaction felt by the electorate.

Parliaments will come into their own again if only they succeed in articulating the interests of society and thereby regain part of the power forfeited to the executive since the Second World War.

Europe's energy problems constituted the second focal point of the Königswinter agenda, the arguments voiced in this context nowadays very much forming part and parcel of the staple diet of debate.

Four years have passed since the oil crisis came home to roost, but the Königswinter talks, while including any number of jeremiads and fine-sounding appeals, failed to come up with either analyses or proposals that might have convinced in equal measure pessimists and optimists, opponents of nuclear power and apostles of growth.

At Königswinter, as in all energy debates conducted in recent years, visions of the apocalypse proved more telling than a down-to-earth, sceptical assessment of the pros and cons.

The one side argued that we face the prospect of a truly stupendous energy shortfall, while the other reckoned that to take the nuclear plunge would be to court disaster in the form of total destruction of the ecological balance.

Yet is it really true, as one British speaker claimed, that even if energy consumption declines there will be an energy shortfall of 400 gigawatts by the turn of the century?

The alternative, he maintained, was to build twenty 1,000-megawatt nuclear power stations per annum in the meantime. Yet 20,000 megawatts — a year, mind you — is the rough equivalent of the total current output of each and every nuclear power station that is operational in Western Europe.

In all other respects most British delegates viewed the prospect with equanimity. North Sea oil is beginning to flow rather than trickle, and Britain is increasingly fascinated by the idea of being the oil sheikh of the Common Market.

Both sides certainly agreed that research into non-nuclear energy sources ought to be funded more generously than has hitherto been the case.

The Bonn Ministry of Research and Technology has earmarked roughly 1,000 million deutschmarks for nuclear research this year but set aside a mere 300 million marks for research into alternative sources of energy.

Topics popular at past Königswinter talks were dealt with in a distinctly low key. The first day of talks coincided with the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. Twenty years ago Britain was still very much orientated towards splendid isolation and the special relationship with the United States.

Nowadays British membership of the EEC is, of course, taken for granted, but the Europe of the Marketeers' dreams has receded well beyond the political horizon.

No mention as made at Königswinter of the European Monetary Union, let alone of political integration. How much economic integration, delegates wondered, will have to be forgone in order to accommodate new would-be members such as Portugal, Greece and later Spain.

Jean Monnet and the men who were instrumental in setting up the Common Market envisaged membership as meaning relinquishing day by day a little sovereignty.

One British delegate at Königswinter was reminded by this comparison of a slimming cure. It was, he said, as though you shoulder a sacred trust, but step on to the bathroom scales only to find that it has made no difference whatever to your weight.

Might not direct elections to the European Parliament give the EEC a fillip once MPs included such outstanding parliamentarians as Willy Brandt, François Mitterrand and Shirley Williams?

A Federal Republic delegate viewed the prospect with scepticism. He had grave misgivings about transforming the Tomb of the Unknown Parliamentarian into a political graveyards of better known names.

Direct elections, he pointed out, cannot disguise the fact that the European Parliament is powerless in many major respects.

Why, for that matter, should governments share their privileges with a supranational institution when they are everywhere fighting tooth and nail to retain power? By no means every party or coalition in power is as lucky as Mr Callaghan in being able to fall back on a "strategic reserve" of Liberal MPs.

East-West ties and detente have been features of the Königswinter agenda for years. They reminded one British dele-

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Britons and Germans have much in common, but there are discernible differences

Rolf Breitenstein, the author of this article, recently retired from the diplomatic service after a five-year tour as press officer at the Federal Republic's embassy in London. He is also a former *Frankfurter Rundschau* correspondent in London and here summarises his views on differences between the two countries.

People in Britain and this country have much in common, yet they remain easy to distinguish. Their haircuts, their trousers, their entire lives are fashioned differently.

The Germans live in the heart of Europe on territory that has no natural frontiers. Their history has for the most part been a matter of either unbounden expansion or a painstaking restoration of order behind unnatural frontiers.

The British live on the outskirts of Europe and on islands surrounded by a frontier that could hardly be more natural

There are those who would never dream of setting foot outside Britain and would soonest keep foreigners out too; there are others who have fashioned islands of the British way of life all over the world, especially in India. The Empire was never much more than a pattern of islands of this kind.

The British Isles have been on the map for as long as anyone can remember, and the British have developed an island mentality ever since the Norman Conquest.

This phenomenon is an interesting example of how, in a given historic situation, existence begins to colour awareness and awareness begins visibly to fashion patterns of existence.

There can be no mistaking the manifestations of this island mentality. My home is not only my castle, it is also a one-family residence — and be it only a council house.

Children wear school uniforms and go on to form a lifelong link with their college or their regiment. They are also either C of E or chapel, (Church of England or nonconformist), and distinctly different in their forms of worship and denominational traditons from those current in Europe.

They also join a club ("the perfect way of combining the drawbacks of social life with the boredom of solitude") which is designed to cater for the needs of a specific social category.

Individually and among their own kind the British keep their distance from others, and both as individuals and as a nation they are accustomed to a policy of non-intervention, of "splendid isolation".

Is British society a class society? Yes, but this definition is too rough-hewn. Distinctions are more subtle. Take, for instance, Oxbridge.

The universities of Oxford and Cambridge are undeniable islands of academic excellence against the background of education as a whole. Yet not only do the two shun each other's company, they also subdivide into a myriad of separate colleges.

Each college is concealed from the outside world by high walls and subdivided within with the built-to-last finality of an ants' nest or a coral reef.

Free and imaginative thought has prospered within these confines over the centuries. Newton's discovery of the laws of gravity heralded a new era. Byron's decision to keep a bear as a pet at college because dogs and cats were prohibited is an instance of more eccentric views.

Within such confines communication threatens to grind to a halt, to petrify in ritual or to cease altogether, in which case the entire structure is in danger of collapse.

The lives of Britons and Germans are built on different foundations that correspond to a different outlook on life and a different concept of freedom.

For Germans freedom is a sublime concept to which one aspires. This is as true of Goethe as it is of the German workingman, who is eternally on the point of achieving salaried or civil servant status.

For the British freedom relates to something else between which and oneself one draws a line, not to say a distinction. This "something else" is tolerated even though it may not be understood.

In Britain there are millions of workingmen who are firmly committed to the working class and, should progress

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■ FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Bonn puzzled by Warsaw's anti-German campaign

Poland has recently been swept by an orchestrated wave of anti-German sentiment which subsided as quickly as it came to a head.

"Spontaneous outrage" was voiced at shopfloor meetings and in a newspaper campaign, only to fade away as suddenly as it had come to the fore.

Warsaw called off the entire campaign and the curtain fell, leaving Bonn wondering what the purpose might possibly have been.

It was evidently not linked to specific demands. Shopfloor resolutions and newspaper reports contained no pointer to this effect.

There are, we are given to understand, no current negotiations that might involve fresh financial or politicial commitments required of this country.

Relations have grown quite extensive and there is no need for indecent haste. So the performance does not appear to have been connected in any way with bilateral considerations of any major diplomatic import.

The campaign may, of course, have been intended first and foremost for domestic consumption. Polish Party leader Edward Gierek may have had compelling domestic reasons for pointing an accusing finger at bogyman Bonn.

Poland's economic problems are as intractable as ever, and Mr. Gierek's position is as unchallanged as that of a high-wire artist about to attempt the salto mortale.

Warsaw has, moreover, been urged by other Communist countries to do something about the civil rights movement with which the Polish leader appear to have been prepared to achieve a modus vivendi.

Poland's neighbours have for some time viewed signs of a modicum of liberalism with undisguised mistrust. The anti-Bonn campaign may have been intended to counter this sentiment.

At the same time, however, Warsaw will have wanted to try to see wether there has been any change in Bonn's attitude towards Poland.

Last June Mr Gierek was accorded a cordial reception in this country, since when relations have reverted to a routine basis.

Staff at the Polish mission in Cologne may even have suspected that this country is less well-disposed towards Warsaw than it has been in recent years.

The strength of such evidence as they might have put forward is, however, less indicative of trends in this country than of the sensitive nature of relations between the two countries.

Warsaw was upset that a court in Hagen, Westphalia, was anxious to clarify the course of events in Lamsdorf transit camp. During the post-war expulsion of Germans from Poland a large number of German nationals are reputed to have died at this camp.

Poland is doubtless less worried by the individual instance than by the thought that the entire context of expulsion might be recalled.

The Polish government would prefer such excesses as might have occurred to be conveniently forgotten in view of German behaviour towards Poland and by the terms of what might be termed a historic and moral amnesty.

On the other hand Poland fails to see why trials of war cirminals in this country are increasingly being quashed because of lack of evidence or because the accused are allegedly no longer in a fit state to stand trial.

By no means all the evidence Poland is prepared to supply is being used, it is claimed. If this country wanted to set the record straight it could no doubt start proceedings against alleged Polish war criminals, but it is hard to see what good this would do now.

Poland also notes that the Bonn government has failed to fulfil its undertaking to rewrite school textbooks. At the end of Mr Gierek's visit to this country Chancellor Schmidt untertook to do his best to ensure that "the recommendations of the joint textbook commission are adopted."

As it happens, the Federal government has no mandatory powers in this context. States ruled by Social Democratic governments are prepared to accept the recommendations, wheras states governed by the Bonn Oppsition parties are less enthusiastic.

Christian Democrats point out that the recommendations are governed less by historical truth than by considerations of political opportuneness.

Warsaw is also upset that migrants from Poland by virtue of German extraction are officially registered in this country as expellees. This entitles them to the appropriate documents and legal rights.

Here the Poles are surely making a political mountain out of an administrative molehill. They similarly note that in official ddocuments the city of Lodz is occasionally designated by its artificial Nazi name, Litzmannstadt.

Yet they seemingly attach less importance to the fact that there is said to have been a map with the outlines of the old frontiers of the German Reich at a Christian Democratic party conference.

The Poles do, however, take exception to the activities of a pressure group claiming to represent landowners in Sudeten Germany and the German Eastern territories.

This strange organisation appears to have issued forms with the aid of which former land- and property-owners have

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fail to materialise, are prepared to console themselves with the words of John Milton "They also serve who only stand and wait."

There are many definitions of the differences between the British and German ways of life. Germans tend to think and act on principle, whereas the British are given to a pragmatic approach.

Germans invariably want to transform thesis and antithesis into the Hegelian synthesis, whereas the British regard synthesis as little more than an interlude.

Germans are intent on achieving harmony, whereas the British are orientated more towards conflict. Yet the unbounden striving after harmony can lead to the chaos of the *Götterdammerung*, whereas the rule of conflict can lead to the emergence of "fair play" and a sense of order.

Conflict situations underscore the virtues of tolerance, whereas the striving after harmony can induce the striver to condone totalitarianism.

Put in terms more specific and more to the point, in Germany minorities run the risk of being terrorised and wiped out by the majority. Think, for instance, of the fate of the Jews consigned to the gas chamber.

In Britain, on the other hand, the majority runs the risk of being terrorised and paralysed by minorities. Take, for instance, the recent strikes by a handful of workers who succeeded in preventing the printing of *The Times* or laying low entire corporations.

This insight into the price Britain has to pay for its version of freedom brings us to the root cause of the much-vaunted but seldom understood "English sickness".

It is the same root cause that in its day enabled Britain to pioneer the industrial revolution, establish Britain's economic predominance and lay the foundations of the much-admired British way of life.

In 1776 Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* paved the way for the industrial era, mainly because his postulate of industry as the source of all wealth and of the division of labour as the means of exploiting this source of wealth to the full in Britain had an immediate effect.

The general principle of freedom by virtue of, let us say, differentiation was transformed, in the economic context, into specialisation leading to an increase in output by leaps and bounds.

Two hundred years later Britain had declined to the role of an ailing industrial nation with a declining standard of living. This was mainly the result of Britain's social and economic structure proving less suited to the transformation to a later stage of the industrial revolution than those of its competitors, notably the United States, this country and Japan.

This Stage Two of the industrial revolution may be characterised by the assembly line, by product standardisation, standardisation of labour and consumption, not to mention that of labourers and consumers.

Karl Marx seriously underestimated the stability of a coral reef by the name of Great Britain when he forecast imminent proletarian revolution.

A few years ago there were rumours of private armies and an imminent coup in Britain. These rumours proved baseless, but so may reports that with North Sea oil rolling in, Britain is on the brink of an economic miracle.

North Sea oil is proving a sluggish commodity and Britain would be only too happy if oil revenue were to plug the balance of payments gap by 1980 or so.

Oil will not change established structures either, although it might induce an atmosphere that is more conducive to change — which in itself would represent a substantial gain.

Three current social trends should prove of far greater importance for the future shape of British society:

- the introduction of comprehensive education as a means of breaking down class boundaries of the previous educational system,

— the debate on industrial democracy as a means of drawing workers and employers closer together — Britain's accession to the European Community as a means of leading the country out of its isolation on the outskirts of Europe.

All three trends run counter to established patterns and are thus most controversial. There are many retarding factors, of course.

Many teachers, not to mention parents and pupils, lament the problems encountered in connection with the introduction of comprehensive schools.

The Bullock Report on industrial democracy has so far failed to induce either management or shopfloor, in theeens, to view integration more favourably.

Four years and a referendum after Britain joined the EEC many people still regard the Common Market as a kind of late colonial milch—cow or an inevitable nuisance rather than a stimulus to more intensive integration.

And as for the somewhat nebulous concept of devolution, it too has more to do with the traditional search for freedom in differentiation and detachment than with a more up-to-date viewpoint.

Yet diehard though old-established traditions may be, there are signs that their demise is in the offing. Many of the old London clubs are having to close and the bulldozers are at work changing the face of the entire country.

Under the influence of the United States and the Continent including, of course, the Federal Republic of Germany Britain's class society is slowly being transformed into a society of consensus.

Already many people no longer regard peacetime coalitions or a step in the direction of proportional representation as stuff and nonsense.

Foreign observers tend to feel that the transition is progressing far too slowly, bearing in mind that Britain is in at the deep end economically. But patience and consideration prove their true worth when times are hard.

It would be unwise for this country to bombard Britain with bright ideas and to suggest that haste is not necessarily indecent.

It is, when all is said and done, illogical to lament the decline and fall of Old England on the one hand while criticising Britain on the other for insufficient appreciation of what is deemed up-to-date.

It would, however, do no harm to show Britain how industrial democracy, federalism and a version of proportional representation work in this country — without, of course, insisting on copyright or suggesting that the German way is the only possible solution to the problems involved.

Britain and Germany are heading in different directions. In Britain established patterns are being dismantled, with the result that minorities such as Britain's coloured community no longer feels as sure of the tolerance of the majority as it used to.

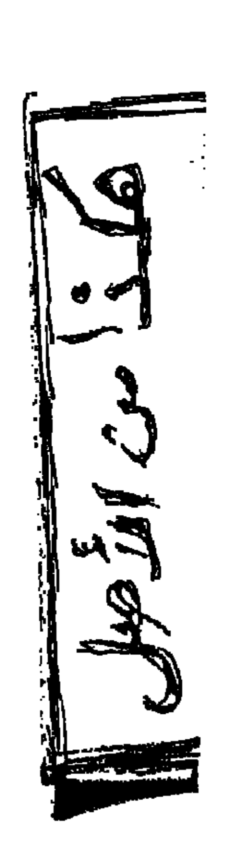
In the Federal Republic social structures are growing more rigid, with the result that the majority is less safe from being paralysed by a minority such as air safety control officers than it used to be.

This swing of the pendulum in differferent directions renders understanding between our two peoples even more difficult and even more indispensable than might otherwise be the case.

Like poles may attract but, to switch metaphors, they also have little to say to each other. Communication is the result of differences. People in Britain and this country are similar enough to exercise a mutual attraction yet sufficiently different to have something to say to each other.

Rolf Breitenstein

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 25 March 1977)



■ HOME AFFAIRS

CDU takes over the SPD stronghold of Frankfurt

The CDU landslide victory in the state of Hesse local government elections has earned Dr Walter Wallmann (CDU) the Mayoralty of the city of Frankfurt, traditionally an SPD stronghold.

The election success came as a surprise to Dr Walter Wallmann, a former judge and son of a secondary school teacher.

In fact, it is quite conceivable that he might secretly have hoped that the CDU, while gaining ground in the Hesse muncipal elections, would fail to achieve an absolute majority over the SPD/FDP Coalition when his party told him to campaign in Frankfurt as a vote-getter.

Now Dr Wallmann has to abandon his succesful career in Bonn. But this is no problem for him, for he has always been a man of many parts. In fact, only once did he suffer political defeat within his own party. That was twelve years ago when he wanted to become State Chairman of Hesse of the *Junge Union* (the CDU's young people's branch) and was defeated by Heinz Riesenhuber.

Dr Wallmann, a law graduate, went into politics in 1966. He became a member of the State Parliament and chariman of the Domestic Affairs Committee.

Soon after he made a name for himself when, in a State Parliament debate, he called out to the then Premier of Hesse: "Mr Prime Minister, you are faced with the shards of your policy". But for a few years the SPD managed to glue these shards together.

Dr Wallmann has been a mayor once before – though only on paper. In 1970 he was elected Mayor of Marburg by the CDU, FDP and the Free Voters' Association. But the election had to be repeated due to a formality. The FDP broke away, and the SPD candidate Drechsler became Mayor.

But Dr Wallmann, at that time CDU chairman for the Marburg-Biedenkopf *and Central Hesse districts*, helped the CDU gain a majority in the Marburg City Council. He has been the Council Chairman ever since – an office which was previously held by the ex Federal Minister of Justice Gerhard Jahn. The two jurists get along well with each other. They formed the SPD/CDU Coation in Marburg in order to take the wind out of the sails of the five Communist Council Members.

Dr Wallmann was elected to the Bundestag in 1972, where he devoted himself primarily to domestic policy and legal affairs. At that time he became known even outside Hesse in his capacity as the parliamentary administrator of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party. He cleverly and energetically presided over the Enquiry Committee in the Guillaume Affair.

Before the last Bundestag election he was in the running as a candidate for the post of Minister of Justice for the CDU. After the Kreuth split between the CDU and CSU, he became Deputy Parliamentary Floor Leader, and retained this position until the CSU returned to the fold.

Albert Bechtold

(Münchner Merkur, 23 March 1977)

Mayor Rudi Arndt resigns

Rudi Arndt (SPD), Mayor of Frankfurt until the recent CDU landslide victory in the Hesse muncipal elections, has a reputation for political tenacity and for having a skin which, though thick, has a sort of "Teflon effect", meaning that nothing sticks to it.

Due to these qualities, it seemed as if Frankfurt's fifth post-war Mayor had a guarantee that he would grow old in office. When Rudi Arndt, 50, relinquished his post as Hesse Minister of Economic Affairs in favour of the Frankfurt Mayoralty in 1972, the latter job was generally considered a "gateway to death".

And, indeed, Arndt's predecessor, Walter Möller, died of a heart attack. And another predecessor, Willi Brundert, wrecked his health in this post and died as a result.

Werner Bockelmann withdrew from office in a state of total exhaustion and opted for the more quiet post at the Federation of German Cities in Cologne. Walter Kolb, the first post-war Mayor, also wrecked his health and died in office.

The lethal chain has been broken by Rudi Arndt, who relinquished his office as a result of a lost election.

Tragically, the thoroughbred politician has to abandon the task of his life, namely the city of Frankfurt, at a moment when Frankfurt, for the first time since the fifties, had reason to hope that the prediction of its becoming "even less habitable than the moon" would not come true.

Herr Arndt improved the financial situation of this country's most indebted major city.

He was also the motivating force behind the creation of the "Frankfurt Environment Association" which made supra-regional environment planning possible in the Rhine-Main area.

But Arndt was also the man who cashed the 200,000-deutschmark contribution to his party and who failed to take the necessity of properly entering this amount in the books seriously; and it was also he who played a role in affairs that led to the formation of three Hesse State Parliament Enquiry Committees in connection with the Helaba (Hesse State Bank) and similar affairs.

His premature resignation (he could have remained in office notwithstanding the election results) came under the influence of the psychological shock and a personal political catastrophe. But this resignation will enrich rather than impoverish the municipal scene of Frankfurt since Arndt will be joining the City Parliament as a member of the Opposition.

Hans Hellmuth Kannenberg

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 23 March 1977)

Bonn and Warsaw

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applied to local authorities in what is now Poland to reaffirm their claims.

Enough of these forms seem to have been posted to the Polish authorities for Warsaw to feel distinctly uneasy. The Polish government is apparently worried lest unrest spread in parts of the country that used to form part of the Reich. The anti-Bonn campaign was doubtless intended to spike these guns too.

Should Mr Gierek have decided to put ties with Bonn to the test with such fears in mind, he must surely have found the outcome reassuring.

Hardly had the Polish wave of protest registered in this country but Chancellor Schmidt granted *Polityka*, the Warsaw daily, an interview in which he assured Polish readers that relations between Bonn and Warsaw were in the pink of condition.

Helmut Schmidt has been accused by his own Social Democrats of being responsible for setbacks in Ostpolitik. He does not want to be saddled with troubles with Poland too.

Ludolf Hermann

(Deutsche Zeitung, 1 April 1977)

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gate of a French opera in which, he recalled, the chorus keeps on singing "Marchons, marchons!" but does not move an inch in the process.

Yet the sum total of views on detente proved fairly positive despite the caustic comments of a number of Federal Republic politicians who have still not come to terms with Bonn's East bloc treaties.

Detente, it was conceded, may not have eliminated the East-West conflict, but it has perceptibly reduced in number and intensity the crises that periodically upset relations between the two sides.

In the process detente has presented both sides with fresh problems, Eurocommunism in the West and civil rights movements in the East.

Would a "historic compromise" between Italy's Christian Democrats and Communists spell disaster for Europe and Nato? A "hysterical compromise" between Communists and Gaullists in France would be an even more upsetting prospect, it was argued, since both are on record as being opposed to Nato, to European integration and to the United States.

So it might be advisable, or so a Federal Republic delegate maintained, gradually to incorporate the Italian Communist Party in political decision-making. This, he argued, might accelerate long-overdue reforms on the one hand and speed up the break between the CP and the Kremlin on the other.

As for East bloc dissidents, the West would do well to steer clear of the Woodrow Wilson syndrome and not give rise to expectations of freedom which it is subsequently unable to fulfil.

Over the years Britain and this country have reversed their roles in virtually every respect. This country used to admire Britain's democratic institutions; now the British are gazing longingly at the organisational lining of the German economic miracle.

They are quick to ask how the "concerted action" talks between unions, employers and Ministry officials work, and then to wonder whether arrangements of this kind can profitably be exported in any way.

British delegates found it far easier to ring the praises of the good Europeans of the Rhine – Europayers, indeed, to paraphrase the German word.

When it came to cash, especially the deutschmark, a complete volte-face was very much apparent. The German suddenly found themselves arguing along cautious, pragmatic lines that used to be Britain's forte, while the British indulged in full measure in the flights of fancy that used to be the hallmark of German idealism.

The two sides certainly seem to have learnt a trick or two from each other in Königswinter over the years.

Josef Joffe

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 26 March 1977)

Citizens' action organisation continues to grow

The chairman of the *Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz* BBU (Confederation of Citizen's Initiatives for the Protection of the Environment), Hans Helmuth Wüstenhagen, has said: "Nothing would be nicer than if we could disband again."

But the BBU is now further removed from dissolution than ever before. Its power is growing from day to day, and so is the number of its members.

BBU is the umbrella organisation for some 1,000 citizens groups which, according to its chairman, who has been in office for the past four years, comprise about 300,000 citizens fighting against nuclear power, noise, dirt and the spoiling of the landscape.

The BBU and its chairman, who is known nation-wide, consider it most important that the internal structure of the organisation remain unchanged and unassailable in the face of success.

Contrary to general assumption Wüstenhagen heads a democratic organisation. Its delegates meet once a year and every citizens action group forming part of the umbrella organisation has between one and five representatives depending on its numerical strength.

Organisations which want to join the BBU must have at least 50 members and thus prove that they can enlist the citizens' support for their cause. Internal decisions are regulated by the statutes, one of the prerequisites being non-partisanship. This keeps extremists out of the organisation.

The 13-man executive committee of the BBU is an elected *body. Equipped* with such a mandate, Herr Wüstenhagen and other executive committee members negotiate issues concerning environment protection roughly fifty times per annum on Bonn State Secretary or Cabinet level.

Hans Helmuth Wüstenhagen's relationship with politicians is not exactly cordial. Says he: "They usually don't call us in until their problems become unmanageable." Usually his encounters with politicians take place in the form of confrontations.

They know very little, says Herr Wüstenhagen, and are only just beginning to concern themselves with the nation's vital problems. Had they done so in good time, Wüstenhagen maintains, there would be no citizen's initiatives.

Hans Helmuth Wüstenhagen, an active member of the FDP, was at one time a counsellor in the pharmaceutical industry. He became interested in environment protection when the city of Karlsruhe wanted to establish an aircraft approach corridor dangerously close to his home.

Today he heads an association which according to his own rough estimates collects membership dues and donations to the tune of 200,000 deutschmarks per autumn.

According to Herr Wüstenhagen, the BBU receives 250 letters a day, all of which have to be answered. Schools, citizens' groups and individual citizens ask for information material.

According to Herr Wüstenhagen, the rethinking process on the environment has progressed further among the citizens than among institutions. Thus, for instance, the trade union leadership is slow to "see the light".

Rolf-Peter Henkel

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 28 March 1977)

■ LAW

Experts differ in court on effects of life imprisonment

The first panel of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (this country's Constitutional Court) began on 22 March a two-day hearing on the constitutionality of Paragraph 211 of the Criminal Code which makes life imprisonment mandatory for murder.

The case came before the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* when a court in Verden refused to impose the mandatory life imprisonment sentence on an ex-policeman from Berlin. The policeman, who has meanwhile been sentenced for drug trafficking, stood trial for and was convicted of having "heinously and in order to cover up his own criminal acts" shot dead one of his pushers with three bullets in the back.

Although the Verden court considers the guilt of the accused proved beyond reasonable doubt and although the murder was committed with malice afore thought which calls for mandatory life imprisonment, the court considers Paragraph 211 of the Criminal Code unconstitutional because it deprives the judge of any leeway in passing sentence. In this particular case, says the Verden ruling, long-term imprisonment of not more than 15 years would have been adequate punisment.

Essentially, the Verden court considers mandatory life imprisonment for first degree murder unconstitutional for three reasons, although the lengthy summation of the court reads in some places as if it rejected life imprisonment in general except in cases of genocide.

Firstly, the summation says, life imprisonment infringes on human dignity because of its personality-destroying effects. Secondly, it violates the basic right of personality development in accordance with that passage of the Constitution which states that basic rights in toto are inviolate and the freedom of movement guaranteed by the Constitution is entirely nullified in the case of life imprisonment.

And thirdly, the Verden court maintains, mandatory life imprisonment violates the principle of equality by imposing such a penalty in the case of first degree murder only whereas, in the case of manslaughter (premeditated murder without the particular criteria of first degree murder), the court has an option of imposing life imprisonment or a shorter term.

According to the Verden court, there is no absolute necessity for this inequality of treatment. There are forms of first degree murder which are criminally no more reprehensible than certain types of manslaughter.

In so-called "concrete standard control procedures" the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* examines the constitutionality of a law under all conceivable aspects.

The present case before the Constitutional Court is of particular political significance because the Federal Ministry of Justice is at present examining plans whereby lifers would have their cases reviewed with regard to a possibility of parole or whereby a review would have to take place automatically after 12 or 15 years of life sentence has been served.

According to the plans of the Federal Ministry of Justice, parallel to such reviews the State Premiers would still exercise the right of granting pardons for those sentenced in their respective states.

But within the coalition SPD-FDP Parliamentary Parties in Bonn there are also some trends to abolish life imprisonment altogether. But it is certain that the lawmakers' plans will not be implemented before the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* has ruled on the present case – and such a ruling is not expected before the end of this year.

Although it is generally not assumed that the Constitutional Court will declare life imprisonment unconstitutional in all cases, its ruling will have its effect on the plans of the Ministry of Justice and the coalition parties by either strengthening them in their endeavours or by restricting their scope of action.

The proceedings at the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* are being attended by observers from seven Federal states and the Federal Ministry of Justice as well as the former police officer who triggered it – although the latter is not a party to the proceedings.

Eleven experts have been asked to present their views, and *Bundesverfassungsgericht* Justice Hans-Joachim Faller presented statistical material collected by the second panel of this Court in connection with constitutional complaints of lifers with which the Court had dealt in previous proceedings.

According to this material, 1,915 people were sentenced to life imprisonment in the period from 1945 to 1975. Of these, 90 per cent were men.

Almost half of them were aged between 21 and 29 when sentenced and almost 80 per cent between 21 and 40; 46 per cent had no previous criminal record, 140 of these lifers died in prison; 702 were pardoned after an average of 20 years imprisonment; 70 per cent of lifers spent more than 15 years in prison.

According to Justice Faller, neither the Federal Ministry of Justice nor the Bavarian Prime Minister, who was specifically questioned on this topic, consider life imprisonment unconstitutional. The same applies to the five criminal panels of the Federal Court of Appeals.

On the first day of the proceedings experts presented their views on the question whether life imprisonment causes irreparable damage to the personality of the prisoner.

Professor Paul Bresser, a specialist in forensic medicine, answered this question with a cautious "no". His views were based on his participation in "social forecasts" which he had to prepare for proceedings to grant pardon to lifers in Northrhine-Westphalia and on examinations of pardoned lifers after their release from prison.

According to Professor Bresser, his social forecasts concerning more than 100 lifers whom he had to examine with a view to a pardon were favourable, and subsequent rehabilitation successes, he said, justified his thesis that lifers suffer no personality damage. Said Professor Bresser: "Even extremely long terms of imprisonment must not necessarily lead to personality deterioration."

Professor Bresser drew attention to terminology difficulties in assessing the effects of life imprisonment. Before proceeding any further, he said, we must clarify what the term "personality" means. Only once this has been done can we meaningfully speak of "destruction of personality".

For Professor Bresser, "personality" is the overall person as determined by his experiences, his attitudes to life and his ability to mould his own existence. The difficulties in assessing the effect of life imprisonment lie, according to Professor Bresser, in the fact that no one knows much about the personality of the person concerned before he entered prison.

Generally speaking, the inclination to commit murder is already the nadir of personality deterioration. Thus the deterioration of personality which is frequently considered the result of imprisonment usually occurs prior to imprisonment, manifesting itself in the committed murder.

Bearing in mind the low initial personality standard of the people concerned, imprisonment usually has a positive effect. Professor Bresser stressed that this must not be viewed as a plea in favour of life imprisonment, but that he was merely described its effects as he knew them.

Two practitioners of the penal system took the stand after Professor Bresser. Essentially they described individual cases from their experience and freely granted that the material available to them was relatively limited.

Both these practitioners – the former Warden of the Women's Prison in Preungesheim, Dr Helga Einsele, and the Warden of Hamburg's Fuhlsbüttel Prison, Hans-Dietrich Stark – tended to go along with the thesis whereby the lifer's personality invariably deteriorates after a certain term of imprisonment.

Dr Einsele told of her own experience with 20 women serving life terms, who were convicted in the period from 1947 to 1957. Twelve of these women had murdered their husbands. But even in the case of those who did not kill their husbands, ties with the spouse did not last through the term of imprisonment.

Dr Einsele spoke of health deterioration and premature aging, especially among elderly women who were sentenced to life imprisonment.

In his report, Fuhlsbüttel Warden Hans-Dietrich Stark put forward a plea for a modern penal system in general and used this opportunity to voice specific complaints about the existing system.

His report centred around what he termed "total correctional institutions", where work, leisure time and partner relations, are all lumped together.

Herr Stark reported about this experiences with 71 lifers. All of them showed signs of damage attributable to such a "total institution."

Herr Stark went on to say that we must do away with the prejudice that lifers are particularly dangerous people. He pointed out that individual clothing (non-prison garb) and decoration of his cell according to the inmate's taste helped the prisoner preserve his personality.

After expressing his views on the penal system in general rather than just life imprisonment, Herr Stark arrived at the following conclusion: Resignation and adaptation to a life behind bars set in after the fifth or tenth year in prison. Said Herr Stark: "No man can do penance for more than ten years." After ten years the prisoner no longer relates his punishment to his crime. Therefore, apart from the aspect of safeguarding society, imprisonment for more than ten years is meaningless.

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 23 March 1977)

Frankfurter Allgemeine

New contracts law to protect the consumer

As of 1 April 1977 our citizens will be able to throw away their magnifying glasses which they have hitherto needed to read the much-dreaded fine print in contracts. This, in any event, is how the Federal Ministry of Justice in a brochure circulated in one million copies explains the new consumer protection laws in its chapter on "General Terms of Business".

Up to now, the law intervened only when such basic principles as the "freefom of entering into a contract" and the equitability of a contract were placed in jeopardy by unscrupulous businessmen.

As Federal Minister of Justice Hans-Jochen Vogel put it in Bonn on the occasion of the coming into effect of the new General Terms of Business, such infringements were particularly prevalent in instalment purchases, insurance contracts and in brokerage contracts for housing. New legislation governing package tour contracts is still under debate in the Bundestag.

The new regulations governing General Terms of Business centre primarily around clauses which have now become illegal. The following points are of particular importance to the consumer:

- If for instance an order form states "delivery on 1 July" in the front, any clauses on the back of the form saying that "the foregoing delivery date is not binding" is automatically invalid
- The "fine print" must be easily readable and understandable even without a magnifying glass. Escape clauses such as "delivery as soon as possible" are impermissible.
- Equally impermissible are price increase clauses for goods or services in cases where delivery of the goods or rendering of the services is to take place within four months from the conclusion of the contract.
- Clauses which, curiously enough, always impose penalties for non-performance on the part of the customer and never for non-performance on the part of the seller, are null and void.
- Null and void are also non-liability clauses such as "the buyer relinquishes all recourses" or "the guarantee does not include damage for which usually no guarantee is granted, as for instance, mirros and special veneers."
- Inadmissible is also the hitherto much practised charging for transportation, labour and material costs within a guarantee period. As of 1 April, such costs must be borne solely by the seller for the duration of the guarantee.

As Minister Vogel put it, "The new law enforces the citizen's freedom to enter into a contract which is guaranteed to him by the basic right of free personality development."

But there is still a big bugbear inherent in the new legislation: Municipalities are still excluded from all liability for non-performance involving claims for damages in connection with the supply of gas and electricity. And the Postal Authority is excluded from liability in its telegram service even in cases where its staff has acted negligently – and even where it has done so intentionally – to the detriment of the consumer.

Eberhard Nitschke

(Die Welt, 28 March 1977)

■ INSURANCE

Complaints against insurance firms bring call for an ombudsman

Fifty thousand million deutschmarks a year ring through the cash registers and flutter serenely through to the bank accounts of private insurance companies.

Last year thirty million claims were handled and 20,000 complaints were lodged with the government agency in Berlin that functions as a court of appeal.

This agency normally only hits the headlines when companies apply for an increase in premiums for compulsory policies, such as third-party cover for motor vehicles.

Only one in four of the 20,000 complaints was upheld by the Berlin agency. In motor insurance, for instance, proceedings are instituted in only one per cent of cases. In other insurance sectors litigation is even more infrequent.

These are statistics the insurance companies produce year after year in order to substantiate their claim that relations between companies and policy-holders are all sweetness and light.

But this is only half the story. It neatly begs the issue of dissatisfied policy-holders who are simple not sure of their legal position and throw in the towel rather than take the company to court; they do so because of the risk of crippling legal costs.

What is more, claimants often settle out of court, making do with a bird in the hand even though they may be entitled to two in the bush.

Insurance companies' relations with their clients are doubtless no better or no worse than in other trades, professions or businesses, but they are not as untroubled as the statistics customarily quoted might appear to indicate.

For the layman insurance is unusually complicated because it provides a service that is invisible. That is why there has been much public discussion of late about improving consumer safeguards in the insurance sector.

As a general rule public debates of this kind culminate in a demand for the establishment of fresh committees, commissions or bodies with whom complaints may be lodged and who will, it is hoped, perform a better service than their predecessors.

So it came as no surprise to learn that the latest idea is the appointment of an insurance ombudsman, an impartial official whose job it would be to follow up complaints, suggest solutions to shortcomings and generally provide advice.

Holland and Switzerland already have insurance ombudsmen.

Before going into the pros and cons it is worth noting the complaint facilities that insurance policy-holders already have at their disposal.

First, complaints may be lodged with the company itself. It goes without saying that if you are dissatisfied with the treatment you have received your first letter of complaint is going to be sent to the insurance company's head office.

If the complaint is dealt with by the same assessor as beforehand, the likelihood of a more favourable settlement is, of course, slender, which is why a number of companies have set up complaints departments of their own — undoubtedly a good idea.

The insurance agent's influence ought not to be underrated either. If the client so wishes he can intervene and will often be able to bring about a more satisfactory solution. Successful, leading agents can frequently work wonders.

Viewed in this light there is obviously a difference between one agent and another. It is by no means necessarily six of one and half a dozen of the other.

In a number of sectors the terms of the policy expressly provide for certain bones of contention being submitted to independent tribunals.

In a dispute concerning indemnification in respect of an accident claim appeals may be submitted to a medical panel, for instance.

As for the usual householder's policy, the claimant may also apply to an independent tribunal to assess the damages covered by the terms of the policy.

The various insurance sectors also have national bodies and organisations. They are not entitled to impose a settlement when a dispute between company and policy-holder arises, but they can and do mediate.

Since associations of this kind are keen to maintain their members' reputations for fair trading they will usually act on claims that are of general interest.

In recent years the number of complaints lodged with the government agency in Berlin has increased by leaps and bounds - probably because an increasing number of people are aware of its existence.

It is not, however, a court of appeal in the sense that it is entitled to impose a settlement. Often it will reply to the effect that it cannot be of assistance and the policy-holder will have to take his case to court.

Yet a letter of complaint to Ber)in is always a good idea. The agency acts in a supervisory capacity to the insurance industry as a whole and companies are none too keen on being reported to Berlin more often than can be helped.

To some extent complaints rebound on the Berlin agency itself, which is responsible for terms of contract that are considered either incomprehensible or unfair.

The terms of policies are submitted to Berlin for approval, so the agency may find itself at the receiving end of complaints that a condition or turn of phrase it has deemed satisfactory makes no sense or is unfair to the policy-holder. So there clearly are occasions when even the Berlin agency, which may reasonably be considered to be on the consumer's side, feels overtaxed and would prefer to refer complaints to independent arbitration.

If the worst comes to the worst, claimants have no option but to take their cases to court, but there are good reasons why many prefer not to do so.

Litigation can cost a small fortune, and although you can take out insurance cover against the cost of court cases, cases of this kind are not covered except when the point at issue is a straighforward claim for damages.

What is more, few members of the legal profession can lay claim to a thorough grounding in the more out-of-the-ordinary forms of insurance business, and those there are usually work for the insurance companies themselves.

Besides, both companies and their industrial organisations employ legal staff, which means that they are generally at an advantage over the other side when cases come up before the courts.

Mind you, consumer associations have increasingly concerned themselves with insurance matters of late. They too provide referral services.

Then too, there are the media. An increasing number of policy-holders write to their local newspaper or to the broadcasting authorities in anticipation of assistance.

Frequently this assistance takes the form of information and the recommendation to address a complaint to the competent body. People are often unaware of the opportunities that are already open to them.

So is there any point in appointing an ombudsman as yet another institution for handling complaints? Probably not. He would just be yet another link in the chain without affording substantial relief.

Policy-holders would merely be even more confused than they already are. What is more, ombudsmen cost money and are as liable to festoon themselves with red tape as anyone else in a similar position.

If an ombudsman is to be appointed, he ought surely to amalgamate the existing facilities. He should exclusively service the sector extending from company complaints departments at one end to litigation at the other.

He would, however, definitely need to be both independent and impartial and to enjoy the confidence of all concerned. Otherwise his appointment would be a waste of time.

Arno Surminski

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 29 March 1977)

Inge Lore Bähre heads watchdog agency for banks

Business as usual is very much the motto of Frau Dr Inge Lore Bähre, who has headed the government's watchdog agency supervising the activities of the banking profession since 1 October 1975.

From her desk on Reichspietschufer, Berlin, she is keen to emphasise continuity as the byword of her agency's activities. In her inaugural address she stated that laxity would not be condoned, but she is at pains to note that the phrase she used had in fact been borrowed from one of her predecessors.

On closer acquaintanceship there can be little doubt that she is the right person for the job. She is a chain smoker, but conveys the impression of self-assurance and imperturbability.

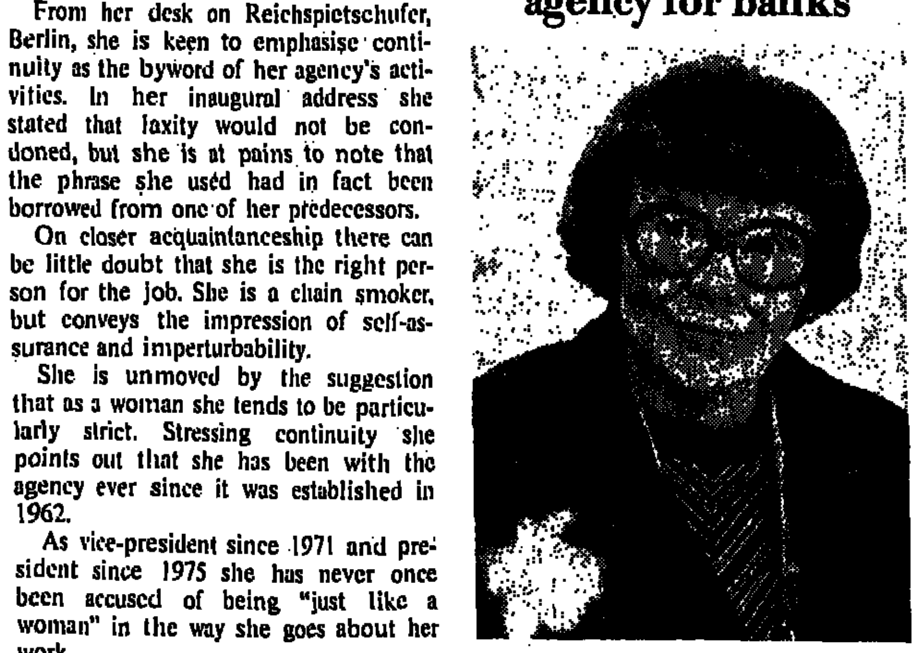
She is unmoved by the suggestion that as a woman she tends to be particularly strict. Stressing continuity she points out that she has been with the agency ever since it was established in 1962.

As vice-president since 1971 and president since 1975 she has never once been accused of being "just like a woman" in the way she goes about her work.

Frau Bähre has been responsible for surveillance of the activities of overseas investment funds. Out of a total of 200 funds applying for permission to operate in the Federal Republic she has given only 35 the go-ahead.

She also testified to pluck and foresight in her handling of a spectacular bank crash resulting in the cessation of activities by the Pfalz-Kreditbank.

Of late she has paid greater attention to the activities of public-sector institutions such as local authority savings banks. Directors have been caught selling stocks and shares illegally abroad, fined by the tax authorities and subsequently banned from the banking profession by Frau Bähre.


(Photo: dpa)

Frau Bähre is a pains to emphasise that such drastic action is seldom required and that a career ban is only imposed after due consideration in each and every case.

Inge Lore Bähre, who was born in Insterburg, East Prussia, in 1920, does not approve of differences in management selection procedures between private and public-sector banking.

But when it comes to senior management appointments by a Landesbank or savings bank her Berlin watchdog agency is only consulted once the politicians have had their say.

Candidates are vetted and nominated by state and local authority governments or officials and then referred to Berlin for consideration of the nominee's suitability as a banker.

Frau Bähre is unhappy with this state of affairs. Improvements could well be effected here and there, she feels. Supervisory boards of Landesbanken and savings banks are for the most part political appointees. She wishes they would demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility in management appointments.

Appointments in this sector are frequently made with party-political *proporz* in mind. This is not the yardstick by which a banker should be measured and Frau Bähre wishes her agency were not handed the can when political nominees do not measure up to the requirements of the position.

Inge Lore Bähre is confident that peace and quiet will return to the banking world before long. "I am not a clairvoyant, mind you," she adds.

Should it do so, much of the credit will be due to her. Frau Bähre feels that minimum reserve requirements, as they now stand are satisfactory, as are the opportunities of intervention placed at her agency's disposal by recent legislation.

She has been associated with banking in one form or another all her working

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■ LITERATURE

Till Eulenspiegel not just a harmless joker, says researcher

Till Eulenspiegel was no harmless jester, but a symbol of the devil. This surprising interpretation has been put forward by Bernd Ulrich Hucker, research assistant for history at the Teachers College in Münster.

Herr Hucker has thus lent new impetus to the research into the main character of the Eulenspiegel story, dating back to the early 16th century which has meanwhile been translated into 15 languages.

Hucker caused a sensation two years ago when, in the catalogue of a major Hamburg book auction, he stumbled upon the oldest Eulenspiegel edition dating back to 1510/11. He managed to purchase this edition, which had been considered lost, relatively cheaply.

Stimulated by his sensational find, Hucker went to work analysing the text and arrived at an interpretation contrary to all previous theories about the popular hero.

According to Herr Hucker, Eulenspiegel was neither a harmless jester nor an anti-authoritarian hero and protestor on behalf of the peasants, but he symbolised the devil whose misdeeds were recorded by the book's author Hermann Bote (about 1460 to 1520), a customs scribe, as a "deterrent example".

The 100 Till Eulenspiegel episodes depict the jester as the prototype of an evil person who — frequently without any motivation — harms his fellow man; who cheats, teases, mocks, defies and, in the truest sense of the word, besmirches him.

The episodes conveyed by Bote are studded with quotations from the Bible and other religious works of the time. They have been inserted in such a manner that — in conjunction with Eulenspiegel's evil deeds — they can only be viewed as "perversion" of the Christian way of life and, in some instances, as blasphemy.

In the course of his life Eulenspiegel withdraws more and more from the Christian orbit and indeed acquires traits of the Antichrist.

Hucker arrives at the conclusion that the customs scribe Hermann Bote, a man of genuine lay piety, conceived his hero as a "negative figure" and a warning example similar to Doctor Faustus as well as a deterrent for good Christians.

This intention does not immediately become obvious from the introduction which was written in the year 1500. But in characterising his Eulenspiegel episodes Bote makes use of a terminology with which his contemporaries were familiar from another work, the serve epic *Reinke de Vos* (1498).

There the terminology is used to depict a depraved, diabolic person, and the individual stories are intended as edifying tracts.

It is of secondary importance in this connection that Hucker believes himself to be in a position to prove that *Reinke de Vos* was also written by Hermann Bote. What matters is the parallel to *Reinke* (meaning the fox).

The fox, in this case representative of sinful Man, passes through various stations of salvation but is no longer in a position to obtain absolution through repentance.

The sinner Eulenspiegel, too, is incapable of genuine repentance, although all three branches of Christendom try to convert him. Their efforts prove unavailing. In the end the representatives of monkhood, priesthood and laiety bid him "Go to Hell!" In doing so they are unaware of how aptly they have spoken.

There are attempts at converting Eulenspiegel in as many episodes — and Hucker considers this figure by no means coincidental since it provides the key to the structure of the book, which is governed by a symbolism of numbers.

It is divided into groups of ten, five, eight and seven episodes, while groups of three form important stations.

Double episodes create transitions and climaxes. The whole thing begins with the famous triple baptism of Till Eulenspiegel and ends with the still mystifying three burial episodes of the jester.

The final episodes, with their gruesome scenes, clearly depict Till Eulenspiegel as an adversary of the Christian Order. Just as throughout his life all sacraments failed to have any effect on him, after his death, too, he baulks at a sacramental funeral by the Church — successfully so.

In depicting his episodes, Hermann Bote availed himself of popular superstitions according to which events such as the breaking of the ropes, the toppling of the bier and the interference in the funeral by sows have demoniacal significance.

Eulenspiegel is not only a jester, in other words an evil and criminal person in terms of the 16th century, but "the jester of jesters" — the embodiment of evil. He apes Divine functions and pretends to foretell the future, to perform miracles and to be able to heal the sick. But whenever it comes to the crunch all that transpires is an enormous hoax. Everybody who relies on him can be sure of being tricked. In Lübeck Eulenspiegel is supposed to be hanged. When his time comes "he is quiet, speaking not a word". According to Hucker, this is a conspicuous reference to the biblical stance of Jesus Christ in his agony. But as opposed to Jesus, Eulenspiegel was neither humble nor despairing in the face of death. He had the people prove their devotion to him by making them kiss that part of his anatomy where, according to mediaeval superstition, witches kissed the devil, namely the backside. This gains him his freedom for under no circumstance is he willing to sacrifice himself for the people.

The anti-hero Eulenspiegel was thus equipped with attributes of the Antichrist — all the way to parallels to the life of Jesus, but always in a negative or ridiculous form. He undergoes a development and mysteriously adapts himself to new situations. As a result Bernd Ulrich Hucker views the Eulenspiegel book as an early form of the prose novel and speaks of a type of "negative development novel."

But Till Eulenspiegel is neither a novel about a jester, nor is it a mere collection of ribald episodes. In a formal sense, the book is not so much dominated by the natural phases childhood, youth and old age — to which literary researchers hitherto attributed too much importance — as by a number of eschatological stations extending from baptism to funeral.

The fact that in passing through these stations the jester surprises time and again by his foxy ruses has a comical effect on the reader of today.

In the 17th and 18th centuries he was still considered a ne'er-do-well and when the book was recommended as reading matter this was only done as a warning not to become like Till Eulenspiegel.

It is as yet impossible to foretell the consequences of the new Eulenspiegel interpretation. In all likelihood the question as to the historical figure of Till Eulenspiegel will have to be reconsidered.

If his gravestone in Mölln near Lübeck is anything to go by "Till Eulenspiegel!" died in 1350 and was buried in the St Nikolai cemetery there.

But Hucker is rather sceptical as to the actual historical existence of the jester. Says he: "Perhaps we have been led astray — and not only with regard to the authorship of the book." *Norbert Frie*

(Die Welt, 23 March 1977)



Till Eulenspiegel's statue in Mölln, where he is said to have been buried (Photo: Interpress)

Samizdat research centre opens in Munich

Following three years of preparation, the International Samizdat Research Centre and Archives, Munich, has now begun its work.

The Centre is located near Munich University with which it will cooperate closely. It has been financed by the Volkswagen Foundation and other private foundations in the Federal Republic, Switzerland and the United States.

Samizdat is a Russian contraction meaning as much as self-publication. It is based on the former Soviet contraction "Gosizdat" (State publishing house) but it is also reminiscent of "Samogon" (moonshine liquor).

Samizdat publications are manuscripts sold under the counter in the Soviet Union. They are usually duplicated by typewriter and — especially in the case of books — by photographic methods.

One of the first Samizdat jokes, which is still being told to foreigners, is more or less as follows:

"What are you typing there, Grandma?"

"*War and Peace* by Count Leo Tolstoy for my granddaughter."

"But that's required reading, and you can buy it in any bookstore."

"Sure, but my granddaughter reads only Samizdat."

Researchers from 12 countries were involved in the establishment of the Samizdat Research Centre. They hailed from Britain, the United States, Holland, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Norway, Israel and Japan.

The German founding members are Professors Dietrich Loeber of the University of Kiel and Nikolaus Lobkowicz of Munich University. The first director of the Munich Research Centre is Professor Martin Dewhurst, an expert in Russian and Soviet literature, of Glasgow University. Professor Dewhurst has been appointed a guest lecturer at Munich University.

The Research Centre was domiciled in Munich primarily because Munich has great many researchers on Eastern Europe, among them members of the Institute for USSR Studies, which was dissolved by the Federal Republic, and which published *Who's Who in the USSR*.

Another reason for siting the Centre in Munich was that Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, which are located in that city, have the greatest collection of Soviet Samizdats. Moreover, Radio Free Europe also owns the largest collection of Samizdat texts from the non-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe.

Radio Liberty usually broadcasts around the clock in the languages of the Soviet Union, while Radio Free Europe — also broadcasting around the clock — adresses itself to the smaller member nations of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon.

The Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Incorporation stated that it was prepared to place its Samizdat collection at the disposal of the Samizdat Centre for research purposes, free of charge.

The American lawyer Albert ... played a major role in founding the Centre and has been appointed its special adviser. In the period from 1971 to 1976 he compiled a 22-volume Samizdat series of Radio Liberty for eight Eastern bloc research centres in the United States and in Western Europe. *Edmund Th...*

(Die Welt, 24 March 1977)

■ CINEMA

Hitler epic by film-maker Hans Jürgen Syberberg

Adolf Hitler's is still a name that gives rise to heated emotions. Take Marlene Dietrich, for instance. Marlene of the fabled legs, heroine of the thirties' film epic *The Blue Angel*, recently announced through her French lawyers that she intended applying for a court injunction against the title and final scene of the film *Adolf and Marlene*.

Ulli Lommel, director of the film that promised to be the subject of litigation, promptly announced a retake of a number of scenes starring Adolf, played by Kurt Raab, and Marlene, played by Margit Carstensen.

Lommel is by no means the only film-maker currently working on the life and times of the *Führer*. Joachim C. Fest, author of a standard biography of Hitler, is currently engaged in putting the finishing touches to a 1.2-million-deutschmark, ninety-minute documentary entitled *Hitler — A Career*. He has scoured the globe for two years in search of material for inclusion in his compilation.

Last but not least, Munich film-maker Hans Jürgen Syberberg has just completed twenty days of shooting at Bavaria's Geiselgasteig studios. Syberberg's film, entitled *Hitler in uns — A Film from Germany, Land of Progress*, will cost a reported one million deutschmarks.

Syberberg, who was a little fatigued after a hard day's shooting when interviewed by *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, insisted that his title was definitely intended to be programmatic.

The film will, however, be very much his (Syberberg's) own work both intellectually and aesthetically, referring to such a wide range of Western tradition to such an extent that he was rather alarmed at the idea of Hitler as a tag.

He would much prefer Hitler in his film not to assume the proportions of "an inordinately omnipotent figure in terms of intellectual history." He does, on the other hand, take Hitler seriously and regards him (protracted pause while the tries to find the right epithet) as the "gravedigger of the West."

Hans Jürgen Syberberg was born in Pomerania in 1935, grew up in the GDR and holds a PhD in Germanic studies. He now lives in Munich where he is a freelance film producer and director.

He made his first mark with documentaries such as *Fritz Kortner rehearses 'Kabale und Liebe'* (1955) and *Sex Business, Made in Pasing* (1969), in which he took the lid off sex film-maker Alois Brummer.

In 1968 he directed *Scarabea*, an adaptation of Tolstoy's short story 'How Much Land Does A Man Need?' In 1970 he followed it with a film version of Heinrich von Kleist's novella *San Domingo*.

Yet Syberberg failed to break through to a wider public either with these early works or with subsequent output. Maybe it is because his work has always made considerable intellectual demands on the viewer.

He first hit on the idea of a German trilogy during work on *Ludwig — Requiem for a Virgin King* in 1972. Hitler and Karl May, the late nineteenth century writer of adventure books for boys, are the other two. Syberberg made a three-hour film on Karl May in 1974 which was recently shown on ZDF, Channel Two of Federal Republic TV.

Both Adolf Hitler and Karl May put in an appearance in his film about the allegedly insane mid nineteenth century King of Bavaria — as a nightmare seen by the hapless Ludwig in a Venus Grotto reminiscent of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*.

Syberberg himself terms this reference "somewhat naive". With the passage of time he has come to see a closer link between Ludwig II, Karl May and Adolf Hitler. The composer Richard Wagner undeniably influenced all three.

So to be exact it will be a German tetralogy, not a trilogy, part four being the five-hour documentary *Winifred Wagner and the Tale of Haus Wahnfried* (1975), which is to be screened in full by Westdeutscher Rundfunk during the Easter period.

Hitler in uns is also envisaged as a five-hour blockbuster co-produced by Federal Republic TV, the BBC and France's ORTF with financial backing from the Bonn Ministry of the Interior and the Film Promotion Institute.

It will previously be given cinema showings, but Hans Jürgen Syberberg does not expect the film to be a money-spinner. He feels it will prove an outsider, with too many "negative thresholds" placed in the viewer's way for it to earn a fortune at the box office.

Syberberg's Hitler film will deal with the phenomenon of the man in 23 episodes, but "the phenomenon", he adds, "is his supporters, are ourselves. I feel we are proving faithful executors of Hitler's legacy, and this the film is intended to show."

Unlike Stalin, say, but very much like Ludwig II and Karl May, Syberberg argues, Hitler was the result of a full-scale popular movement, and in such cases it is always hard to decide whether the man made the movement or vice-versa.

But this media dependence from both above down and below up is, the Munich film-maker continues, "doubtless what makes both the man and his repercussions unique."

Syberberg's film is intended to be neither a historic reconstruction nor the tale of an anti-hero. In order to impress upon the viewer that "each one of us possesses some characteristic or other of Hitler, who himself was a man of many parts," the entire cast play the part of Hitler in addition to their own.

"Hitler," Syberberg claims, "will be an extremely fractured figure, in no way reduced to the status of a great actor."

In aesthetic terms Syberberg's latest film recalls his Virgin King. Shots are projected on to a gigantic backdrop and the cast act out their parts in front of this background "in a world entirely of their own, in their own dimension of rooms and strange forms that take on the shape of reality within the spectator."

The Third Reich made great play with symbolism derived from heraldry, uniforms and rhetoric. Everything in Syberberg's film is similary intended to be of powerful symbolic effect.

Hans Jürgen Syberberg (Photo: dpa)

"At this point my concept of form coincides with that of the Nazis," he says, "so that I in my way do them justice — but I turn them upside down. It will be a Nazi world but turned topsy-turvy and reduced to the absurd by means of aesthetic stratagems."

We shall not know until this autumn whether or not Hans Jürgen Syberberg has done his own expectations justice, but he will shortly be showing a few clips from his footage in Düsseldorf, afterwards answering questions in a debate entitled Kitsch and Tragic Consequence.

Rolf Thissen

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 23 March 1977)

Herbert Achternbusch both directs and stars in his latest film

Bierkampf is the name of the latest film directed by and starring Herbert Achternbusch. Achternbusch, although personally captivated by classics of the commercial screen such as Huston's *African Queen* or Mankiewicz's *Barefooted Countess*, has remained true to himself, an unerring outsider in the film industry.

Achternbusch does not seem to care two hoots about the viewing habits or entertainment requirements of the general public. He films the way he lives and what he experiences, bombarding the viewer with sequences or shots regardless of the logic of his storyline, going all out for grotesque situations, absurd confrontations and unrealistic connections regardless whether or not the viewer may be able to follow.

Rather like Karl Valentin, Achternbusch concentrates on a theme on which he produces variations guided only, if that is the word, by flights of fantasy.

Despite the title, the theme of his latest film is, in fact, uniforms. Beer, as in all Achternbusch films, is a drug and means of communication. Come to think of it, life as he sees it seems to take place mainly in bars. But the thread that runs through the new Achternbusch is that of authority usurped by means of a uniform.

Herbert, the hero (played by Herbert Achternbusch), has stolen a policeman's uniform and decided to see what effect his new identity has against the promising backdrop of the Munich *Oktoberfest*.

But trouble threatens in the shape of his brother-in-law, who feels the newcomer must be Herbert despite the uniform, and even more imminently in that of the police officer whose uniform he has stolen — he suddenly spots the police officer working off-duty as a sausage vendor in the beer tent.

The hero manages to skirt these challenges to his new-found authority, dances like a dervish through the drinking masses (who are mainly out for a good time; but at times aggressive) and gradually grows more aggressive himself.



Herbert Achternbusch (Photo: Erich Schmidt)

He gives women the glad eye, drinks beer from other people's glasses, stages miniature attacks on harmless Oktoberfest imbibers, makes jokes at other people's expense, nearly gets thrashed and ends up conducting the brass band on the stage.

Other drinkers find him amusing, but Herbert suddenly starts to take himself seriously. He is persuaded that he is what he appears to be — a policeman. He is so upset by the disgrace he has proved to the police force that he releases the safety catch on his police pistol, cocks the trigger and commits suicide.

This logic is a far cry from Murnau's *The Last Man*, in which George is unable to cope with the loss of his uniform, or Zuckmayer's *Captain from Köpenick*, in which the hero dons the mantle of an Army officer in order to cut through red tape in pursuit of what he considers to be his rights.

In Achternbusch's *Bierkampf* the uniform proves the wearer's undoing.

Yet Achternbusch's latest film fails to come up with the memorable sequences of last year's *Die Atlantikschwimmer*, which was a visionary masterpiece of the absurd about advertising and the individual.

There may be much to be said in defence of *Bierkampf* but it does not seem to match *Die Atlantikschwimmer* in either its radical approach or its beauty of detail.

At times *Bierkampf* marks time and provocative behaviour by the hero masquerading as a policeman (scenes improvised in a real-life beer tent) seems somewhat vague and tends to fall flat.

Achternbusch evidently experienced difficulty in arranging his material. He relied overheavily on the atmosphere of a beer tent proving absurd in itself, which it did not.

When he chose to lend a hand wonderful, albeit exaggerated, sequences resulted, but Achternbusch's reality and that of the beer tent never really found a common denominator, not even in contradiction.

Yet Herbert Achternbusch's periodic flashes of genius nonetheless render this tragicomedy so undeniably superior to recent cinematic output in this country that *Bierkampf*, despite its shortcomings, remains a work of cinematic art that is well worth seeing. *Eckhardt Schmidt*

(Deutsche Zeitung, 25 March 1977)

■ EDUCATION

Homework a burden for both child and parents, say teachers

Among the many problems of our society there is one which educationalists and experts in family affairs have so far largely ignored. The reason for this is that the parents of schoolchildren have a certain reluctance to point out this problem and call a spade a spade.

This problem involves the inclusion of the parents in the schools' performance requirements which have lately given rise to widespread criticism.

In other words, it seems that the schools can only maintain the standards of performance required of them by enlisting the active support of parents. But neither lawmakers nor educationalists have as yet asked themselves whether parents are willing and in a position to cope with this additional burden — especially in view of the fact that family structures are becoming more and more precarious.

The head of the Centre for New Teaching Methods at Tübingen University, Walter Zifreund, likened our schools to a shoe factory which, instead of providing complete shoes, gives the customer a box containing soles, uppers and heels, expecting him to assemble the shoe himself.

The whole thing goes under the label of homework, and the schools act as if the majority of students could handle this work without outside help.

Unfortunately this whole system is, as Herr Zifreund put it, an illusion, because the entire setup of semi-finished products would collapse in practice if it were not for the mothers who have become the slaves of our schools.

Says an elementary school teacher and member of the Child Protection Society: "Even in elementary schools the children would be unable to cope with their homework without parental help."

And yet, if polls are anything to go by, 95 per cent of parents and teachers coniser homework "useful" or "very useful", notwithstanding the meanwhile generally recognised harmful effects of our performance-orientated educational system.

This utilitarian way of thinking to some extent explains why parents are prepared to submit to the demands placed on them with regard to helping out with homework on top of the many other stresses to which they are exposed.

But a major problem is the parents' inability to understand educational innovations such as New Math and "total reading" to which they are unaccustomed from their own school days and which they therefore have to learn from scratch.

And what about equal opportunity which our school system is supposed to provide and which can certainly not be provided by such methods, since children whose parents are unable to play the role of tutor are clearly at a disadvantage.

Thus, aware of their impotence vis-a-vis the school as a distributor of socia opportunities, most parents resignedly permit themselves to be pressed into this tutor role because they must ge their children through school, come hel or high water.

As a result, the long march through the various stations of our modern certificate factories leads to parents having to relinquish their own interests. It also leads to a loss of faith, love and confidence on the part of the children — as indicated by reports of doctors, psychologists and educationalists — and frequently ends in phobias, psychiatric syndromes and alcoholism among schoolchildren.

Many of these children fall prey to these conditions. The growing number of suicides among students, triggered by failure at school, is only the tip of a gigantic iceberg of psychological disturbances created by excessive performance requirements on the part of parents and the schools.

In his book *Umgang mit der Schule* (How to Handle School), Horst Speichert recommands a prophylactic concept as first aid for parennts confronted with crisis situation. Says Herr Speichert: "The help which children need must not consist in pressure, but in support against the demands of the school."

This means, above all, emotional support. If children — due to their differing learning abilities — are exposed to discouraging disqualification processes from the very beginning it can cause lasting damage to the child's self-esteem, and it is then up to the parents to reassure their children that they are loved, wanted and appreciated at home for what they are and not for their performance at school.

Only this can enable the children to face the next day at school and the competition this entails with the necessary self-confidence.

But it is this very attitude which many parents find so difficult to adopt. Instead of acting as their children's protectors and absorbing some of the school pressures, they frequently add to these pressures — usually with the best of intentions — by punishments such as withdrawal of play privileges, TV viewing time, pocket money and, in many instances, by physical punishment and the withholding of affection.

A great many children must buy their parents' affection with good marks.

In the name of a supposedly "better future", all this leads to a school-family relationship which makes the present intolerable for the child.

Says a secondary school teacher: "I have frequently discussed with my colleagues whether we should abolish homework altogether or perhaps give homework in a manner that would be fun for the children. But the subject of homework has become something of a holy cow, and no one dares to touch upon it."

The number of those who dared milk this cow — if only tentatively — on its pasture of empirical experiments is very small indeed.

There have been a mere four studies on the subject of homework made in the Federal Republic during the past twenty-five years — and even these disappeared in the flood of more than 500 articles on educational matters published every month.

But this has probably suited the proponents of the drill method because these four studies would have destroyed the *myth* of the educational effect of obligatory copying, repetition and learning by heart.

There are perfectly practicable ways out of the homework dilemma. But the parents would have to insist that homework consist only of work which has been thoroughly explained at school and therefore does not have to be explained again by mother or father.

Until parents take such a stand, says Professor Hellmuth Diwald of Erlangen — himself the father of two children — homework will remain the daily Stations of the Cross for parents.

Says Professor Diwald: "The demigods of our school system have yoked the parents to the vehicle of their school objective. As a result, the parental home will remain the nation's auxiliary school."

E. Schirmbeck

(Deutsche Zeitung, 25 March 1977)

Stricter kerb drill urged for young children

To the edge of the pavement and no further, should be the guiding principle for children of pre-school age on the street — be they alone or with their parents.

The edge of the sidewalk, beyond which lurks the danger of automobiles, motorbikes and bicycles, should delineate the limits of a child's freedom of movement until it has learned to cross the street.

This is the objective of the German Traffic Safety Council which, in cooperation with a West German TV network has evolved a new five-part children's series entitled "Dolli — Children in Traffic" which is to be broadcast on Sunday afternoons from 17 April to 5 May.

Children are unpredictable in traffic and tend to prove their courage by actions which are frequently fatal. Last year alone some 60,000 children under the age of 15 were involved in traffic accidents, of which 1,150 were fatal.

Children of pre-school age are particularly prone to accidents. It is therefore of paramount importance, says the German Traffic Safety Council, for parents to provide an example.

Observations prove that adults are frequently anything but exemplary in their behaviour. A particularly frequent mistake made by adults is to cross a street against a red traffic light while children patiently wait for the light to change to green.

The only admonishment parents give to children is usually just "watch out for the traffic". This, says the German Traffic Safety Coundil, is not enough since the very young ones do not even know exactly what to watch out for.

The psychologists Maria Limbourg and Rudolf Günther established that only one in three four to five-year olds know how to cross a street at a normal pace. Most children just dash across heedless of the traffic.

Small children cannot see what is going on beyond a car. And three-year olds have a hard time coming to a halt when running, nor can they distinguish from which direction a car-horn signal has come. Their concentration ability does not extend beyond 15 seconds.

Professor Gerhard Stöcker of Würzburg has evolved a time plan for traffic education, since more than half of all parents begin to teach their children too late — usually when they are four.

Professor Stöcker recommends that traffic education begin at the age of three, when the child should be told that it may not step off the sidewalk and explained that it must stop when it hears a car horn being sounded. A four-year old should be told to use its scooter or tricycle only on the pavement.

But once children go to school they should attain a certain degree of independence in traffic, following careful instruction by the parents. Too much concern about the child can prove harmful.

Studies show that children who have been over-protected by their parents and who, until their second or third school year, have been taken to school, are much more in jeopardy than children who have been less protected, are more independent and understand traffic signals.

Rolf Henkel

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 18 March 1977)

Dyslexia still cannot be properly defined

In the past few years dyslexia has more and more been used to describe and excuse below-standard performance by teachers, students, educational policy makers and parents.

The reading and spelling inadequacies of children with normal intelligence, which is frequently described by means of this now fashionable term, still lacks an exact scientific definition.

The Rhineland-Palatinate Minister of Education Dr Hanna-Renate Laurien said recently "We know that dyslectic children make the same mistakes as others, only they make them more frequently. But we are also beginning to understand that we cannot evade educational responsibility by using clinical terminology."

As a result, says Dr Laurien, we should begin to teach reading and writing in the same manner as we teach it to dyslectic children. If this were done, we would soon find that there would be much less dyslexia.

In her assessment of the situation, Frau Laurien is supported by leading dyslexia experts who have arrived at the conclusion that this condition is a mixture of plausible supposition and wanton definitions without fixed symptoms.

The experts assume that dyslexia is being used to justify practical educational actions and that it has an alibi function for teachers.

Despite these problems with the phenomenon itself, Rhineland-Palatinate will continue with its internationally recognised supplementary education for dyslectic children.

This decision has been prompted by the still unsolved question whether there is such a thing as a "hard core" of dyslectics whose inability to read and spell is due to organic causes.

Moreover, the supplementary teaching of a child which is deemed to be dyslectic, with the attendant suspension of the marking system, can have psychologically beneficial effects and help the child to escape exaggerated demands on the part of its parents.

Minister Laurien suspects that the reasons for the inadequacies in reading and spelling — some 14,000 children receive supplementary schooling in Rhineland-Palatinate in the school year 1976/77 — are primarily attributable to the fact that children in modern society are more easily distracted than earlier generations.

M. Biermann

(Nordwest Zeitung, 18 March 1977)

■ MEDICINE

High blood pressure, the killer with few symptoms

High blood pressure is much more widespread than generally assumed. Some 40 per cent of deaths in the Federal Republic of Germany can, in varying degrees, be attributed to this disorder.

If the ailment is recognised and treated in time it can be remedied, and many heart and circulatory ailments with fatal complications such as heart attacks and strokes could be prevented.

Alas, the early diagnosis of high blood pressure is hampered by the fact that — as a rule — the dangerous disease causes no physical complaints that would induce a patient to see a doctor. As a result, locating the risk factor high blood pressure is one of the most important tasks of preventive medicine.

A study recently presented by the *Badische Anilin- und Sodafabrik AG* (BASF) on the frequency of high blood pressure among the working population was aimed primarily at locating people suffering from this ailment and inducing them to see their physician.

The study also wanted to track down changes in heart functions resulting from hypertension by means of electrocardiograms. Moreover, the scientists who worked on the study wanted to trace links between hypertension and other risk factors for the heart and the circulatory system by means of laboratory tests.

Some 37,000 staff members of BASF

Hannoversche Allgemeine

participated in the extensive field study that was carried out in 1974. Within a span of six minutes, their blood pressure was measured three times in the vicinity of their place of work.

This initial test proved that physical work must be considered an antidote for high blood pressure. Moreover, the field study confirmed the results of epidemiological research in the United States and in Europe whereby every sixth man and every ninth woman suffers from high blood pressure.

Two-thirds of hypertension sufferers knew nothing about their condition. And of those test persons who knew about their condition only one in three was being treated.

This demonstrates the importance of preventive checkups and at the same time stresses the necessity of checking the blood pressure when carrying out a medical examination for whatever reason. If this were done, every doctor could take preventive measures without the blood pressure test requiring much of his time.

The study has furthermore established that there is no connection between a person's height and his blood pressure, although there is a connection between blood pressure and overweight.

The researchers were surprised, however, to find that there was a link between smoking habits and hypertension. People who had never smoked frequently had high blood pressure, whereas the blood pressure of former smokers was only minimally higher than normal.

According to Professor Wagner of the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg, this must not lead to the fallacious conclusion that smoking prevents hypertension. In all likelihood there are other risk factors which play an important role. Thus for instance non-smokers are frequently more overweight than smokers, and elderly cigar smokers frequently have a higher cholesterol level.

Particularly startling was the observation that smokers more frequently find blood in their urine than non-smokers. According to Professor Wagner "this is of considerable interest with regard to the discussion about a possible link between smoking and cancer of the bladder."

Konrad Müller-Christiansen

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 25 March 1977)

Continued from page 8

life. During the war years in Berlin she was in trusteeship, having studied management economics.

She sets great store by personal contact with bankers, but work for the most part means paperwork, particularly the vetting of monthly reports submitted by the various banks.

She took a PhD in Göttingen in 1948 with a thesis on Stages in the Direction of a Definition of the Nature of Money. Until 1962 she worked in Hanover, mainly in the banking department of the Finance Ministry.

Frau Bähre usually works well into the evening, but she still manages to find time for her hobbies, which include cooking and embroidering East Prussian bridal attire.

Since taking over as head of the Berlin agency she has succeeded in completing two bridal carpets. One is in regular use in a church near Hanover where her daughter-in-law is a clergywoman.

Gerold Osterloh

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 26 March 1977)

Complete middle ear transplants prove a success

Professor Christian Betow, Berlin, is still the only surgeon capable of transplanting a preserved middle ear in toto.

He carried out his first transplant of this organ in 1959. Meanwhile, he has succeeded in restoting hearing without mechanical aid — in other words, a hearing aid — to 780 patients.

A transplant of the middle ear is indicated when, following surgery to remove that part of the ear, as frequently has to be done as the result of an infection, replacement becomes necessary. But the operation can also be carried out in cases of certain hereditary malformations, when it can restore full hearing ability to the patient.

The organs to be transplanted consist of parts of the eardrum, the hammer, the anvil and the stirrups.

The transplant organs must be removed within 24 hours following death and preserved in a special solution at a temperature of four degrees centigrade. One week later they can be released for the operation.

Transplants of parts of the middle ear are carried out all over the world today. While many organs of the middle ear can be implanted, the stirrups are usually replaced by a simple wire loop. In this manner hearing can be restored virtually completely, although success is not as convincing as in cases where a natural stirrup has been transplanted.

This operation can now be carried out by the method developed by Professor Betow, whereby the middle ear is transplanted as a whole.

But such an operation can only be successful if the inner ear is still operational. Moreover, the so called reserve of the inner ear provides the absolute limit for the extent to which hearing can be restored.

In most of the cases operated on by Professor Betow it was possible to achieve an improvement of between 20 and 30 decibels.

Most impressive is the case of a woman patient who, prior to the operation, was unable to hear sounds of less than 70 decibles. Following the operation she was able to understand whispers spoken at a distance of 30 centimeters from her ear.

The transplant surgery of the middle ear is always carried out under local anaesthetic. The organ to be transplanted is attached by means of gelatine which dissolves after a while or can be sucked away later.

In the first few days after the operation the patient is treated with antibiotics and cortisone in order to prevent rejection of the new organ. As a rule, he can be discharged from hospital after a week.

The new middle ear takes about four to six weeks to graft itself into position. Hearing is usually restored after six to twelve months.

A number of important advantages speak in favour of transplants. As opposed to a hearing aid, the surgery can restore full hearing. Furthermore, it prevents atrophying of the reserve of the inner ear, which virtually always occurs where mechanical hearing aids are used.

Konrad Müller-Christiansen

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 23 March 1977)

Psychology helps fight flab

Scientists of the Psychiatric Clinic of Göttingen University have developed a promising new therapy for obesity. They succeeded in treating appetite disorders in such a manner that 180 test women lost a total of 1.5 tons of weight within six months. Their therapy proved successful in 70 per cent of the cases.

The researchers began their work on dietary psychology seven years ago. By means of costly empirical tests they succeeded in tracking down the causes of aberrant eating habits.

In the course of their work they were able to prove that the obese are more influenced by outside stimuli than by their bodies' control mechanisms in their dietary behaviour.

Their appetite can be stimulated by the time of day, the availability of food, stress, boredom or loneliness. Although this dependence can be observed among people of normal weight as well, the latter still exercise control over their eating.

Based on this realisation, the work group developed a programme in which the counting of calories is of secondary importance. Their aim was to teach their patients to observe themselves, and to assess and reward themselves.

By guidelines such as "at home I'll only eat at the place designated for that purpose"; or "I only keep planned foodstuffs in the house"; or "I'll put a morsel on my fork and halve it before putting it in my mouth" the scientists reveal wrong habits and make their patients rethink.

The loss of weight is planned so that it will occur over an extended period and losses of more than one kilo per week are considered undesirable.

Of particular importance is the creation of new "ersatz" outside stimuli. Recognition, reward and fear of ridicule within the therapy group as well as self-confidence proved effective means of correcting aberrant behaviour during the six months of the test programme.

The care of the group has been devised in such a manner that it can be placed into the hands of laymen.

Considering that some 20 million obese people are in need of treatment in this country, the scientists felt that only a programme which does not require specialists can be a success.

Moreover, the cost element is a major point in favour of the new programme. While a stationary zero diet costs about 500 deutschmarks for every kilo of wight lost, the cost of the new programme would amount to a mere 7 deutschmarks per kilo.

The Göttingen group is determined to take the bull by the horns. The next step will be the development of a psychotherapeutic programme for those 30 per cent of participants who fell by the wayside.

dpa

(Münchner Merkur, 24 March 1977)

■ OUR WORLD

Children's villages offer the abandoned a new family



School holidays are just about to begin in Worpswede, near Bremen. Children at the SOS children's village are looking forward to a rest from the trials and tribulations of learning.

In a way the holidays will also make life easier for the matrons who each look after a "family" of children. During term time children of various ages can be home from school at any time between half past eleven and two, clamouring for lunch and parched with thirst.

During the holidays Matron Christiane Tetzlaff of House No. 6 can be reasonably sure that her children will turn up at regular hours for nourishment.

Her children are Lars, aged eight, Frank, aged twelve, Rita, aged thirteen, and Norbert, aged fourteen. In pleasurable anticipation of the Easter holidays they have just finished lunch and are working out how they plan to spend the afternoon.

Christiane Tetzlaff, betraying not the slightest sign of nerves, invites the visitors into the peace and quiet of her own comfortable room with its view of a garden full of the harbingers of spring.

"You need good nerves – the best – to make the grade as a house matron here at the children's village," Frau Tetzlaff says.

She is not the sort who views life through rose-tinted spectacles or is given to exaggerate the good points and conveniently forget the bad. Anyone who fancies her chances as a children's matron, she says, will need to be strictly down-to-earth. There is no such thing as a world in which children are invariably well-behaved.

Christiane Tetzlaff may not describe her work in glowing, glorious colour, but she is clearly keenly convinced that she is doing a good job.

Including her current four she has been and continues to be a mother to fourteen young people.

Frau Tetzlaff is a nurse by profession and started work at her first children's village in the Black Forest in 1960. She "mothered" nine children there before moving to Worpswede twelve years ago.

Her ambition in life has been to help other people as directly as possible. She concedes that motherhood is more than a nine-to-five job but claims that she would not have it any other way.

It can be hard and unrelenting work, keeping her busy round the clock, and although she and her children live like a normal family, additional problems do arise.

Only one child in twenty is an orphan. Most come from broken homes and need to be rehabilitated with infinite patience and care. Children are sent here in the first place on the recommendation of the local authority.

Christiane Tetzlaff is firmly convinced that the educational principles of the children's village are sound but admits that there may be advantages to be derived from placing children with foster-parents. "It depends from one instance to another," she says.

Matrons at the various children's villages are certainly kept on their toes. They attend refresher courses and seminars whenever the opportunity arises in order to keep abreast of the latest developments in education theory and child care.

Whenever Frau Tetzlaff goes off on a weekend's course a standby is at the ready to look after her four children in House No. 6.

The toughest problem you face in her line of work, she reckons, is that of retaining a personality of your own and not allowing jourself to be snowed under by the avalanche of work and the multitude of problems encountered by the children.

"It is far easier to intervene when you retain your own individuality and remain in a position to articulate wishes and demands of your own," Frau Tetzlaff adds. But she sounds a little doubtful, as though life in practice is slightly more demanding.

Whenever possible she tries to keep the "family" together. They either all play games around the family table, or stories are read and other ways and means sought of resisting the temptation to switch on the TV set.

Outdoor activities are also provided. The village itself has two ponies and a redskin encampment. Matron Tetzlaff likes to see her children make friends with children from outside the village.

This makes obvious sense: the more children they know outside their immediate circle, the less the SOS children will find that life centres around their own community.



Matron Christiane Tetzlaff with her children

(Photos: SOS-Kinderdorf e.V.)

Therapy and social work are both writ large at the children's village. Berthold Dunkel, a young psychologist, not only provides individual and group therapy for the children; he also holds regular meetings of matrons to review problems and prospects. No one is left to his or her own devices.

Berthold Dunkel outlines the many ways there are of establishing a relationship with youngsters – by means of educational leisure activities such as sailing, metal- and woodwork and other hobbies, for instance. They all combine both instruction and therapy, not to mention keeping the children busy.

Psychologist Dunkel has nothing but the highest praise for the tireless matrons. He knows only too well how many enthusiastic volunteers turn up and how many fail to make the grade in a punishing training course.

Within the conventional confines of aid to young people the SOS children's villages stand out as an uncommonly effective organisation. They rescue children from the isolation of life in a children's home and provide them with security and stability at a time when the number of children in local authority care is on the increase and the number of foster-parents on the decline.

Rehabilitation of a child deprived of family is a complicated and educationally demanding process. Staff at the SOS children's villages are both responsible and experienced.

What is more, they are not dogmatic and would be the first to agree that their organisation is only one of a number of ways of helping parentless children, and one way does not preclude the other – foster-parents, for instance.

(Bremer Nachrichten, 26 March 1977)

'Refuge' idea was launched 25 years ago

Hermann Gmeiner launched his SOS children's village more than 25 years ago. He came to realise during the hardships of the immediate post-war period that abandoned children need more than food and drink and a roof over their heads. What they need is a substitute for the parents they can no longer call their own and a real home rather than the orphanage or children's home.

The idea on which his *Kinderdorf* is based is that seven or eight boys and girls of various ages live as a family with their matron in a home of their own in the children's village. The idea was quick to spread in this country and before long gained worldwide popularity.

There are now twelve SOS children's villages in the Federal Republic and nine in Austria. A further 118 villages in 59 countries are modelled along similar lines and backed by four million regular contributors to Hermann Gmeiner's charity, SOS Kinderdorf International.

Ammersee is the oldest SOS children's village in this country. The village is picturesquely located on a slope in the Bavarian Alps overlooking the small market town of Diessen.

It consists of eighteen individual homes and the village centre, run by the caretaker, who is the only man in the village. The rest are women, the hard-working matrons.

They come from all walks of life and spend two years in gruelling training before embarking on what they all agree is one of the most rewarding jobs there can possibly be.

Käte Greinwald is one of the women who run the Kinderdorf. She used to be a maid but on reaching the conclusion, at the age of thirty-five, that she was not going to get married, she applied for a job as children's village matron.

That was seven years ago and she has never regretted the decision for a moment. She is as fond of her six children as if they were her own and they call her "Mummy" so naturally that there cannot be any doubt whatever that Käte Greinwald and her children really are a family.

The children themselves grow up feeling very much brother and sister, as experience over the past twenty years has proven.

Frau Greinwald's neighbours are all Kinderdorf matrons of long standing who have brought up between fifteen and twenty boys and girls over the years. "Grown-up" children regularly revisit the village and their own new brothers and sisters.

Some are now married with children of their own. Entire families revisit the village and pay their respects to a Kinderdorf matron who is now a "grandmother."

It is not difficult to divine what has made Hermann Gmeiner's idea such a success. His children's villages imbue the children with a feeling of not being alone in the world. Kinderdorf kids have a home of their own where they are always welcome.

Not even the best-run conventional children's home is in a position to provide such a sense of security which orphans and children from broken homes so badly need to gain the self-confidence that ought to be a child's birthright.

Specialists have since confirmed what Hermann Gmeiner sensed intuitively a quarter of a century ago. Children, especially small children, need a steady relationship with an adult if they are to come into their own.

They also need experience of everyday life. At the children's village meals are not served in a canteen and clothes are not handled by a laundry. Matron cooks for her own "children" and has to go shopping and make do with her housekeeping money like any other housewife and mother.

SOS children do not attend an institutional school either; they go to the local primary or secondary school. Children must be given every encouragement to develop whatever talents they can call their own, Kinderdorf specialists maintain.

The SOS children's villages have set an example that is gaining increasing currency all over the world.

Martin Schwarz

(Kieler Nachrichten, 19 March 1977)

■ SPORT

Football's Grand Old Man Sepp Herberger turns 80

Sepp Herberger, probably this country's most popular sporting figure, turned eighty on 28 March. Herberger captained and coached the national soccer team for 28 years. He has been the subject of reams of commentary in his time and congratulations have poured in to mark his eightieth birthday. Virtually everyone in Germany remembers Sepp Herberger as the coach who guided his squad to World Cup honours at Berne, Switzerland, in 1954, as a soccer genius, an unswerving mastermind and friend and a past master at simple but effective football training.

Sepp Herberger's greatest day was undoubtedly 4 July 1954, when the national team he had coached for so many years beat Hungary against all the odds to win soccer's World Cup in Berne, Switzerland.

Thereafter he enjoyed the confidence of the general public even when luck seemed to be against both him and his squad. Bad luck was not long in putting in an appearance either. Herberger the master tactician who always spoke his mind and usually got his own way retained the upper hand and continued to do so until he decided for himself when he proposed to retire.

When he did so, on 7 June 1964, he had been Reich and Federal chief coach for 28 years. He had been awarded every distinction association football has to offer, not to mention the Grand Cross of the Federal Order of Merit.

His teams had come first, fourth and fifth respectively in the World Cup tournaments in Switzerland in 1954, Sweden in 1958 and Chile in 1962.

When success or failure were at stake the Boss as he was known, was not a man to compromise, still less to succumb to sentiment. In Chile he replaced goalie Hans Tilkowski by his understudy Wolfgang Fahrian in mid-tournament without so much as a by-your-leave.

Eight years previously, in Switzerland, Berni Klodt likewise learnt to his cost that Herberger was no respecter of persons where the team was concerned.

After two great games against Turkey, won 4-1 and 7-2 respectively, Klodt, who played outside-right for Schalke, had to step down for Helmut Rahn. Rahn, Herberger was convinced, would prove even more devastating.

In the event he was proved right. Rahn scored the crucial goals. Once again Sepp Herberger was reckoned to have a psychological knack. His squad admitted without hesitation that he was an unparalleled leader of men, as he so often proved in man-to-man pep talks.

Players capped during Herberger's tenure unquestioningly accepted every word he said, no matter how trivial it seemed. And Sepp's basic tenets sounded simple enough: "The ball is round," "each game lasts ninety minutes," "the next opponent is always the toughest" and "after the game means before the game."

Simple and straightforward was the way Herberger liked to appear, and only Eva, the woman who has been his wife for the past 55 years, felt able to smile now and again, but only from the distance, as it were, because she never attended a single international game.

"A bank director doesn's take his wife to work with him either," Sepp explained. So home life seemed to be run along traditional, patriarchal lines too. In sport Herberger was certainly always a stickler for discipline.

He came top of his degree class in 1930 at Berlin Academy of Physical Education and invariably expected both players and the many coaches he trained to be orderly and disciplined.

He always demanded the utmost both from himself and from others, but he also always seemed to have a sixth sense for what was feasible.



Sepp Herberger

(Photo: Wilfried Witters)

But in the 1938 World Cup tournament in France he was overruled. Herberger wanted to enter virtually the complete Breslau eleven – the first team with which he made his name.

The Reichssportführer had other ideas, however. He wanted to see a Greater German team selected, so Herberger was obliged to combine the German and Austrian teams. The result was elimination in the first round of the competition.

When the war was over Sepp Herberger was appointed Federal chief coach with full powers. He was back in office as an absolute monarch.

Yet matters were somehow different after the World Cup win in Berne. Coach Sepp Herberger, captain Fritz Walter and the team were bowled over by a wave of sympathy.

After nine bitter post-war years the 3-2 defeat of Hungary in Berne was more than a mere victory on the field of play. Any number of people expressed their gratitude for what was hailed as the Spirit of Spiez, where the squad had held a pre-tournament training camp. Team spirit and comradeship still counted for something, an entire country seemed to conclude.

This is perhaps why World Cup victory in 1954 counted for so much more than the Munich win twenty years later. "The first World Cup was a sensation, especially as we had been banned from international soccer for eight long years," Sepp Herberger recalls. "The second win," he adds, "was nearly according to schedule."

As a first-rate midfied player with Waldhof, Mannheim and Tennis Borussia Berlin Herberger himself was capped three times, against Finland, Italy and Holland. He once clashed with the expenses code and was banned temporarily, but is neither money-mad nor resentful of others' earnings.

In 1954 players were paid a 300 deutschmark allowance; in 1974 they received a 70,000-deutschmarks bonus. Times change, he says with a shrug, but will not accept this as an excuse for just any behaviour.

"Under my aegis there would have been no pre-tournament bargaining for higher bonuses!" Herberger declares. Horst Eckel, one of the Berne team, is convinced that "Sepp Herberger would be a great trainer even in this day and age."

Who can tell? Conjecture is mere theory, and Sepp Herberger is a man with a practical bent. He certainly does not need to argue the toss. He could hardly be more popular than he is already!

Rolf Hofmann

(Münchner Merkur, 26 March 1977)

Grand Prix drivers ban Nürburgring circuit

This year's Formula One Federal Republic Grand Prix will be held not at Nürburgring, but at Hockenheim, between Mannheim and Heidelberg. Former world champion racing driver Niki Lauda of Austria, who was marked for life at last year's Grand Prix, inspected the 22.835-kilometre Nürburgring track in conjunction with fellow-driver John Watson and concluded that the eighteen-point safety requirements laid down by the Grand Prix Drivers Association had only been met in three instances. On behalf of his fellow-drivers he announced that the Nürburgring circuit was out of the running as far as they were concerned this season.

Mountains will literally need moving if the Nürburgring Grand Prix circuit is to survive after the verdict given by ex-world champion Niki Lauda of Austria on behalf of his fellow Grand Prix drivers.

The fifty-year-old Nürburgring course, dubbed the most beautiful in the world, badly needs a thoroughgoing road safety facelift that will cost roughly forty million deutschmarks.

"Unless politicians in Bonn and Mainz take swift action, the Nürburgring circuit will from part and parcel of racing history in a very few years' time," a spokesman for Automobilclub von Deutschland commented in Frankfurt.

"Before long the Nürburgring will only be suitable for minor national events or cycle races."

Vacillation by politicians is seen as the main reason why this state of affairs has come about in the first place. "Blame must be laid in equal measure at the doors of the Rhineland-Palatinate state government in Mainz and of the Federal government in Bonn, which has yet to say a good word about motor racing even though this country is the foremost car-owning nation in Europe."

Should politicians decide against improvements to the Nürburgring, this country will be left with only one Grand Prix circuit, Hockenheim, whereas neighbouring France still boasts eight.

Even Hockenheim has its shortcomings. It was only given a provisional go-ahead as a Formula One venue this season because crash barriers still need conversion.

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 25 March 1977)